

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article 'River of the Ice Grizzlies'
Issue September/October 2017



Learning Goal:

In northwestern Yukon's Ni'iinlilij Njik Ecological Reserve, ice-covered grizzlies gather to feast on salmon spawning in the Fishing Branch River. In this lesson, students will learn about the grizzlies located in Yukon's Ni'iinlilij Njik Ecological Reserve, and use Google Earth Voyager to expand their knowledge about grizzly bears and their habitats.

Grades:

3-8

Materials:

- *Canadian Geographic* article "River of the Ice Grizzlies" (September/October 2017)
- Google Earth Voyager, *Brown Bears of Katmai National Park, Alaska* (earth.app.goo.gl/aGYs)
- Google Earth Voyager, *Natural Treasures* (earth.app.goo.gl/TkXoY)
- BBC, *Planet Earth II: Mountains* - view the segment about grizzly bears (Optional)

The Lesson:

- Start by locating Yukon's Ni'iinlilij Njik Ecological Reserve on a map using Google Maps or Google Earth. Zoom out so students can see where they are located compared to the ecological reserve.
- Ask students: What do you know about grizzly bears?
- Read the article as a class. As you go through the article, have students write down interesting words or words they don't understand, any questions they would ask the author, or facts they learn.
- As a class, reflect on these questions:
 - ▷ Why are protected areas important for grizzlies?
 - ▷ Why does the park only allow four visitors into the park each day?
 - ▷ What does Ni'iinlilij Njik mean?
 - ▷ Why are they called ice grizzlies if they still hibernate in the winter?

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article 'River of the Ice Grizzlies'
Issue September/October 2017



- Using Google Earth, students will learn more about grizzly bears by exploring the Google Earth Voyager story, *Brown Bears of Katmai National Park, Alaska*. Locate Katmai National Park on a map and compare it to the location of Ni'iinlii Njik Ecological Reserve.
- As a class, you may also want to view the segment about grizzly bears in *Planet Earth II: Mountains* and/ or explore the different locations using Google Earth and Google Earth Voyager's *Natural Treasures*.

Lesson extension:

- Write a poem, *If I Were a Bear...*, and include at least 10 facts about grizzly bears.
- Have students choose one of the photos from the article and write a short story based on the image.
- Imagine the government has decided to cut funding for the Ni'iinlii Njik Ecological Reserve, which would stop controlling the number of visitors to the area. Write a letter advocating for this ecological reserve and the importance of it for the bears.